



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



January 19, 2024

Welcome to GHLA @ the Capitol, your weekly update about news you need to know related to Georgia's lodging industry and the 2024 General Assembly.

GHLA's legislative team will be your eyes and ears under the Gold Dome.

Legislative Schedule

The Joint House and Senate Appropriations Committee met Tuesday through Thursday this week to hold budget hearings. The Committee heard the Governor's proposed budget priorities and from State Agencies for annual funding requests. The General Assembly will gavel back in on Monday, January 22nd for Legislative Day 6.

Budget Week Under The Gold Dome

Highlights from the budget discussions:

State Economist

Since FY18, state revenues have grown cumulatively by 10.4 billion dollars or 45%, with 91% of that growth coming from FY21 and FY22. The States three largest revenue sources, partial and corporate income taxes, and sales taxes grew by 11.1 billion dollars over the last 5 years. In 2023, personal income tax was down by 1.3 billion dollars, while corporate income tax was up by 1.3 billion dollars. This can be seen as a wash for the State, but it saved money on federal returns. The employment picture in Georgia is strong, with the unemployment rate remaining low nationally. Georgia's low unemployment has put upward pressure on wage growth, creating higher wages but leading to higher prices.

Georgia Department of Economic Development

For the amended FY24 budget, the department, along with all other state agencies, is seeing a \$1,000 bonus for employees to increase retention and recruitment. The top priority is the increase in the administrative budget to cover incremental rent increases, the request is \$300,000.

For the FY25 budget, the department is requesting a 4% increase in employee salaries, which again will help with retention and recruitment. The department also has several requests for rural development, including \$450,000 to create two workforce development positions to support the Rivian and Hyundai projects, \$200,000 to fund a site development specialist, and moving funding from the Rural Strike Force and One Georgia to the department's budget to align with department expenditures.

Investments in Transportation

As the State continues to grow, it becomes even more crucial to maintain a safe, efficient, and reliable transportation infrastructure network. The Governor added 1.5 billion dollars to the AFY24 budget for the Georgia Department of Transportation to maintain roadways and accelerate construction projects. Of that 1.5 billion, 641 million dollars will go towards projects that specifically improve Georgia's freight corridor, and 200 million will go to local maintenance and improvement grants to help communities keep their networks ready for business.

Investments in Safety and Security

The Governor's proposed budget includes 104 million in FY25 to provide ongoing safety and security in Schools around the state. This funding aims to increase resource officer training and physical and technological security improvements. The Governor's proposed budget also earmarks additional money for public safety, by increasing the starting pay for State Troopers and dispatchers.

Tourism Budget Highlights

The Department of Economic Development's 2024 budget is set to increase from \$41 million to \$74.3 million, with the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2025 College Football Playoff National Championship on the horizon in Georgia. The infrastructure projects for these events totals in at \$29,250,000, creating numerous jobs and generating a "huge amount of money back into the state budget" (Commissioner Pat Wilson).

Legislative Committee Work

The House Judiciary Reeves Subcommittee is meeting on Tuesday, January 23rd (Legislative Day 7) to discuss [HB381](#), which is slated to be a hearing only. HB381 would extend protections against harassment to private sector workers in Georgia to ensure respectful workplace environments free from discrimination and harassment.

2024 Legislative Schedule

As a reminder, the legislature released the [2024 schedule](#) which lays out the complete calendar. The Georgia General Assembly took this past week to begin the appropriations process. They will reconvene on Monday, January 22 for Legislative Day 6. The final day of the session (Sine Die) will be Thursday, March 28th.

Legislative Tracking Update

House Bills?

[HB926](#) - Representative Matt Reeves (R-Duluth) Second Chance Workforce Act; enact

[HB929](#) - Representative Jordan Ridley (R-Woodstock) Income tax; exclude net capital gains

[HB930](#) - Representative Jordan Ridley (R-Woodstock) Law enforcement agencies; prohibit posting of booking photo until convicted

[HB936](#) - Representative Josh Bonner (R-Fayetteville) - Education; provide safety of students; require multiple occupancy restrooms and changing areas designated for exclusive use by males or females

[HB938](#) - Representative Imani Barns (D-Tucker) - Senior Stabilization Act; enact ?
[HB940](#) - Representative Todd Jones (R-South Forsyth) - Fair Business Practices Act of 1975; require retail stores to accept cash for purchases
[HB946](#) - Representative Lee Hawkins (R-Gainesville) Special district mass transportation sales and use tax; intergovernmental agreements; revise requirements

House Resolutions

[HR780](#) - Representative Jesse Petrea (R-Savannah) Only citizens of the United States have right to vote in elections in Georgia; clarify - CA

Senate Bills

[SB356](#) - Senator Donzella James (D-Atlanta) Specialized Land Transactions; protections of homeowners in community associations; provide

Senate Resolutions

[SR432](#) - Georgia Commission on Slavery; Governor Brian Kemp, Chancellor Sonny Perdue, and the Georgia General Assembly create a long overdue state agency; urge (PF)

[SR440](#) - Bremer, Karen; commend

GHLA Full Legislative Tracking Update

Please [click here to go to our Legislative tracking page](#) for the complete list of bills we are watching.

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